Advocacy Strategies for Arts Ed: The Good, Bad, and Innovative: Elisabeth Dorman (1 of 5)

Elisabeth Dorman: Good morning, everyone, and good afternoon to our live streamers on the East Coast. My name is Elisabeth Dorman. Please feel free to call me Lizzy [phonetic]. I am the State and Local Government Affairs Manager here at Americans for the Arts, and it's a pleasure to be here today. I got looped in because many of the teams had State Arts Action Network members as part of their teams, and the State Arts Action Network is a professional development network of over 43 state arts advocacy and service organizations. So I got looped in to Team Arts Ed through that program, and then with the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act, ESSA, I've been on board ever since. So it's lovely being here and getting thrown into the world of arts education policy and arts education advocacy. So today, with me on this panel, I have Lana Hallmark, with the Arkansas Department of Education; Wendy Liscow, with the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation; and last, but certainly not least, Andrew Baumann, with Global Strategy. So as we went through these three years all together, providing technical assistance and convening with the 10 state teams, and also, just we had conference calls with them, many emails with them, and last, but again certainly not least, all of the case studies reviewing that, disseminating it, during and as we were reading them, there was all these common themes. We just went through the policy and we found six core advocacy skills throughout all of 10 state teams that we wanted to share with you today. So just I will be going through all of these in detail, but we found that all of these six advocacy skills were needed to provide advocacy infrastructure for successful arts education advocacy. First, sustaining core leadership; second, forming relationships with coalitions; third, fostering allies among elected officials; fourth, building an information base; five, crafting consistent and effective messaging; and last, but not least, again, is creating communication infrastructure for grass roots advocacy. So let's run through these in a little bit more detail. So number one, sustaining core leadership, we have found that efforts with SP3 teams were most successful when they were led by a steering team of arts education stakeholders. These teams were typically small, about three to five people, and the leadership typically represented the state’s education agency, the state arts council, and one or more advocacy organizations. And again, these teams that kept these three to five people representing these different perspectives, they achieved the most success when these individuals stayed on the team throughout the whole effort, to provide consistency, and also, when they were onboarding new members to the leadership team, they were able to provide, you know, knowledge and the history of what the initiative was doing for their SP3 team. And then, of course, they provided diverse perspectives to achieve success with the SP3 initiative. So an example of core leadership, again, all of our teams displayed this, but I had to call out Team Oklahoma. Here today, is Jennifer Allen-Barron, with Oklahoma Arts Council, also, Amber Sharples with Oklahoma Arts Council, and Julia Kirt, Oklahomans for the Arts, and she's actually running for State Senate. So, yay. We're very excited and proud about that. Just every time, the three of them worked very collaboratively throughout the whole three years. Also, just from an internal staff standpoint, all three of them were on every single call, replied to every single email, just were very in sync and worked together and provided their leadership all together. I also want to give them a shout out. They brought together a task force of 24 different people, from throughout the state and from all sorts of arts disciplines, to help inform their arts education policy work and advocacy work, and again, just they all worked very much in tandem and respected each other's specialties. For the second advocacy skill that I want to talk about, it's forming relationships with coalitions. We found that efforts were most successful when you were engaging with people outside of the typical arts education field, and examples of this are
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key influencers, business coalitions, foundations, other grass roots groups, charter school representatives, statewide networks for education advocacy, like the PTA, or education associates, like the State Superintendents Association. I want to call out Team California. I sometimes forgot that they were a coalition because it just seems like they're all the same organization, because they're so in sync and they all bring their own unique perspectives to this work. Within their coalition, of course, they have the California Alliance for Arts Education. They have the close relationships with the California Department of Education, the California State-- the PTA, the California County Superintendents Education Services Association. That's a mouthful. And they all worked in tandem to pursue their Title I policy work. Number three is fostering allies among elected officials. We found that success was achieved when all the advocates and just the SP3 teams in general remained very flexible and adaptable as education leadership changed or political leadership changed, and success was also achieved when they stayed on top of relationship building with changing elected officials. Also, policy opportunities for collaboration, such as ESSA, expanded coalitions and they were able to reach appointed elected officials, and they also were able to tap into VIPs from other sectors, and also, engaging better with legislative leadership. I wanted to call on Team Massachusetts. They also have a really fantastic Arts for All coalition, which includes Arts Learning, MASSCreative, the Boston Public Schools Arts Department, the ESE's Arts Equity Coordinator, EdVestors, Massachusetts Cultural Council, and the Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth. Oh, Project LEARN and Young Audiences of Massachusetts, big coalition. But all those voices together working in tandem, they developed a "Dear Colleague" letter for the legislature to call for the inclusion of arts education for the state accountability plan, and they gathered 60 signatures out of 200, from both sides of the aisle, which is a huge accomplishment and just showed that they really were able to talk to both sides of the aisle and get a lot of support from the state legislator in that effort. Next is building an information base. As you all know, your efforts are most successful when there's some sort of data collection or research to help inform and promote your policy goals, and also, quality data on what's going on with arts education that you can update, easily and regularly. I wanted to call on Minnesota. As part of their project, they hired evaluators to do a statewide survey of teachers, and this was really critical with their work and their TDE, their Teacher Development and Evaluation Statute. And from that survey, they were then able to find where teachers need additional help with a statute, which really informed their program. If you want more information, I recommend that you check out Minnesota's case study or chat with Pam Paulson, who's here today. Next is crafting consistent and effective messaging, and again, we found efforts were most successful when leaders acknowledged the need for developing a messaging campaign about the value of arts education. And I wanted to call out Arizona. They created this whole messaging triangle, and what I mean by that is depending on who they were targeting about training them with arts education messaging, they made a small sound bite message, they made a medium message and a long message, to really keep that in sync and to easily train folks on how they can be better arts education advocates. Last, but certainly not least, creating communication advocacy infrastructure for grass roots advocacy. We found that teams were successful when they had the ability to communicate with and mobilize grass roots efforts in a timely fashion, and using software like VoterVoice, it enables groups to mobilize their grass roots and connect them better with their elected officials, in terms of advocacy. I wanted to call on Michigan because they actually reached out to individuals and organizations across Michigan to help them prioritize and select

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final policy recommendation for arts education, and also to empower educators, advocates, all citizens of Michigan, to provide input on where they want their priorities to be for arts education. And thanks so much for that quick run through. Now, I'm going to turn things over to Lana Hallmark to talk a little bit more in detail of what Team Arkansas was up to.